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Good News in Men’s Health and the Benefits of Exercise

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The 2010 U.S. Census figures show that men are narrowing the gender gap in life expectancy, meaning guys in general are living longer. Many patients ask what they can do to make sure they can enjoy an active, healthy retirement. The best advice is to see the doctor annually, to collaboratively create a health plan based on your age, family history and your unique medical history. Another recommendation for nearly all people is to participate in regular exercise.

The benefits to regular cardiovascular exercise are extensive, and involve all aspects of the body. When exercising regularly, the heart becomes a more efficient pump, meaning it doesn’t have to work as hard to supply the body with the nutrients it requires. This helps lower blood pressure. In some cases, regular exercise and a healthy diet are enough to eliminate the need for blood pressure medication. Moderate exercise also improves focus, the immune system and weight loss.

Starting an exercise program can be intimidating. Remember that the benefits of regular exercise are not achieved only by elite athletes, but also by persons of any fitness level increasing their endurance, strength and overall health. When exercising, the body gives signals for how far and how fast to go. Some of the signs of reaching the safe limit of exercise are feeling breathless, fatigued and sweating heavily. When first starting out, it’s better to begin with short, frequent exercise sessions over the week, with gradual increases in duration.

When planning an exercise schedule, remember the fundamentals. Begin with warming up and stretching, and finish with a cool down period. The cool down helps remove the lactate in muscles and decreases next-day soreness. Also remember to keep well hydrated.

Exercise is a great way to start looking and feeling better, both inside and out. With its many health benefits, there are few downsides to regular exercise, but remember it’s important for people exercising to listen to and take care of their bodies.

For help starting or improving your exercise routine, please make an appointment with your primary care provider.

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